

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CHANG CHUN-CHIAO'S REMARKS ON TAIWAN

REF: (A) PEKING 1282, (B) PEKING 1283, (C) PEKING 1278

(D) PEKING 1284

1. VICE PREMIER AND POLITBURO STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBER CHANG CHUN-CHIAO'S REMARKS TO SENATOR SCOTT JULY 13 CONCERNING THE TAIWAN ISSUE (REFTELS A AND B) ARE AMONG THE TOUGHEST MADE BY A PRC LEADER TO A U.S. OFFICIAL SINCE NORMALIZATION BEGAN. INDEED THEY MAY BE THE TOUGHEST FOR THEIR EMPHASIS ON MARTIAL RATHER THAN PEACEFUL MEANS OF RESOLVING THIS ISSUE, AND FOR BEING COUPLED WITH EXPLICIT REFERENCES TO PRC "PREPARATION" AND "SMALL-SCALE EXERCISES" ON THE FUKIEN FRONT. WE KNOW FROM WASHINGTON AND TAIPEI REPORTING THAT THESE REFERENCES HAVE SOME BASIS IN FACT THOUGH WE DON'T THINK THEY POINT TO ANY PRESENT THREAT TO ROC FORCES.

2. RELATIVE TOUGHNESS IS A QUESTION THE DEPARTMENT CAN JUDGE BETTER THAN WE; THERE FOLLOW SOME OTHER COMMENTS ON THE EXCHANGE.

3. CHANG--AND FOREIGN MINISTER CHIAO, WHO THE DAY BEFORE HAD COMMENTED MORE MILDLY BUT STILL TESTILY (REFTELS C AND D)--MIGHT POSSIBLY NOT HAVE ADDRESSED TAIWAN-RELATED ISSUES IF NOT CONFRONTED WITH THEM. AT LEAST CHANG TOOK CARE TO GIVE THAT

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SECRET

PAGE 02 PEKING 01288 141115Z

IMPRESSION. THOUGH CLEARLY PRIMED TO FIRE AWAY, CHANG

TWICE NOTED THAT IT WAS SCOTT WHO HAD RAISED THE TAIWAN QUESTION. HE SAID THAT THE PRC'S POSITION WAS VERY CLEAR AND UNCHANGED. AND IN FINALLY TURNING OFF THE DISCUSSION AFTER AN EARLIER UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO DO SO HE REAFFIRMED A STANDARD PRC POSITION ABOUT THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE (WE SHOULD BOTH CONTINUE TO ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH IT) AND ABOUT OUR HAVING POINTS IN COMMON IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA.

4. BUT THESE MITIGATING FACTORS PALE A GOOD BIT AGAINST THE FACT THAT WE NOW HAVE ONE OF THE REMAINING THREE OR FOUR ACTIVE MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO STANDING COMMITTEE AND THE PLA'S TOP POLITICAL COMMISSAR ON RECORD WITH A POSITION THAT GIVES NO HINT WHATEVER OF FLEXIBILITY ON THE PRC'S CONDITIONS FOR NORMALIZATION AND THAT EXPLICITLY (HOWEVER UNREALISTICALLY FOR SOME YEARS YET) THREATENS A MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE TAIWAN PROBLEM IF WE FAIL TO MEET THOSE TERMS.

5. WHY? IT IS NONCEIVABLE, BUT ONLY JUST, THAT SOME FEATURES OF THE SENATOR'S STYLE OR DETAILS OF HIS PHRASING PROMPTED CHANG TO EXCEED HIS BRIEF, OR ELSE THAT CHANG FAILED TO REALIZE THE PROVOCATIVENESS OF SOME OF HIS OWN PHRASING. BUT CHANG IMPRESSED US AS A COLD, CALCULATING AND SKILLFUL DEBATER. REGRETFULLY, WE BELIEVE THAT CHANG KNEW JUST WHAT HE WAS SAYING AND THAT HE PROBABLY HAD WHATEVER PRIOR CLEARANCE HE NEEDED WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP FOR WHAT HE SAID. HE DISPLAYED DETAILED AWARENESS OF THE PREVIOUS DAY'S SCOTT-CHIAO MEETING AT WHICH THE TAIWAN ISSUE FIGURED PROMINENTLY. HE MAY HAVE HAD INTELLIGENCE THAT THE VISITORS WERE STILL KEEN TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT. IN SUM, WE THINK HE EXPECTED THE OPPORTUNITY AND USED IT IN A CALCULATED MANNER, TO DISPEL OR AT LEAST JAR TOO-COMPLACENT AMERICAN ASSUMPTIONS THAT THE STATUS QUO IN TAIWAN IS ACCEPTABLE TO PEKING INTO THE INDEFINITE FUTURE. THIS INTERPRETATION LEAVES A GOOD DEAL UNEXPLAINED, BUT FROM THE CHINESE STANDPOINT, RECENT TAIWAN-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS ALL SEEM TO POINT IN THE SAME DIRECTION--A HARDENING OF THE U.S. POSITION AND A CONSOLIDATION OF THE TAIWAN STATUS QUO. THESE DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDE:

--THE JELLING OF AMERICAN EDITORIAL OPINION IN THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS AND INFLUENTIAL PAPERS BEHIND THE NEED TO NORMALIZE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 PEKING 01288 141115Z

WITH THE PRC WHILE PRESERVING A RELATIONSHIP WITH TAIWAN. THE PIECES IN THE NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST AMONG OTHERS STRESSED THAT TAIWAN SHOULD NOT BE "ABANDONED."

--PRESS REPORTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS TO THE U.S. OLYMPIC COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN IN SUPPORT OF PARTICIPATION BY TAIWAN'S ATHLETES IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES.

--PRESS REPORTS OF THE MANSFIELD-MIYAZAWA TALKS IN TOKYO (AVAILABLE IN PEKING AT THE TIME OF YESTERDAY'S MEETING) HIGHLIGHTED JAPANESE "SATISFACTION" AT THE CURRENT US-PRC-TAIWAN RELATIONSHIP.

--ATTENDANCE BY SOME 40 AMERICAN SCHOLARS AT THE "FIFTH SINO-AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON MAINLAND AFFAIRS" HELD IN TAIPEI FROM JUNE 8-13, AND THE PUBLICITY GIVEN SOME OF THE VIEWS STATED THERE.

SENATOR SCOTT'S ARGUMENT TO CHIAO THE DAY BEFORE THAT FURTHER "CONDITIONING" OF AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION WAS A PREREQUISITE FOR AMERICAN MOVEMENT TOWARD NORMALIZATION COULD HAVE REINFORCED THE CHINESE IMPRESSION THAT THE U.S. IS FOOT-DRAGGING.
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